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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes a 5-day orientation and assessment program (for economically disadvantaged people who are unemployed and have no marketable skill) designed (1) To determine the trainees' level of learning, his aptitudes, attitudes, abilities, behaviors and interests in the employment field; and (2) to introduce the trainee to the world of work. Test batteries used by the counseling staff are described briefly: The General Aptitude Test Battery, designed to measure abilities in non-specific areas; the General Clerical Test, designed to measure aptitudes related to clerical work; the Kuder Preference Record, used to locate various occupational interest clients may have; the Bennett Mechanical Comprehensive Test, used to show understandings of the relationships of physical forces and mechanical elements in practical situations; the inter-American series, designed to determine reading and ability of Spanish-speaking people; and the Test for Adult Basic Education, used to determine reading, mathematics and language achievement level. Objectives for the orientation and the assessment components are listed and brief descriptions are given of the various assessment units: Work sampling, "hands on" occupational assessments, physical health and hygiene, physical examination, and vocational counseling. (WL)

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HAMPDEN DISTRICT REGIONAL

SKILLS CENTER

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ORIENTATION & ASSESSMENT

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DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

Hampden District Regional Skills Center
Frank D. Gulluni, Director
322 Main Street
Springfield, Mass. 01105

1976

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HAMPDEN DISTRICT REGIONAL SKILLS CENTER

ORIENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

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Issued April 5, 1976

Orientation and Assessment is designed for a dual purpose: to determine the trainee's level of learning, his aptitudes, attitudes, abilities, behaviors and interests in the employment field; and to introduce the trainee to the world of work, its rewards and responsibilities. The test information and observations are used to guide the trainee in the formulation of a workable program to meet his personal and employment needs. This is achieved through a series of exploratory instruments and work situations from which the counseling staff and the trainee assess his over-all performance.

The program is a five day orientation and assessment concept; however, the length of time is contingent upon the individual's educational and employment history, goals and objectives.

Prior to entering O + A program, the client must be certified C.E.T.A. eligible. To be certified C.E.T.A. eligible, the client must be determined economically disadvantaged according to the guidelines established by the Department of Labor: a) he must be unemployed or underemployed and meet specific economic criteria; b) without a marketable skill; c) must indicate a desire to participate in the C.E.T.A. program.

The use of a combination of individual instruments and batteries provides the counseling staff with a more solid basis of evaluation than could be obtained from any single measure.

The following is a description of each of the batteries that might be administered during the O + A component:

The General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) was developed by the United States Employment Service. It is designed to measure abilities in non-specific areas. The test is subdivided into ten parts which can be combined to obtain various aptitude patterns. Each is designated by a different letter: G. general aptitude; V. verbal aptitude; N. numerical aptitude; S. spatial aptitude; P. form perception; Q. clerical perception; K. motor coordination; F. finger dexterity; M. manual dexterity. These scores may be evaluated singly or as a whole allowing the counselor and trainees to locate specific strengths and also areas in need of improvement. The client's scores can also be compared and evaluated against standardized scores established by the Department of Labor for each occupational area.

The General Clerical Test is published by the Psychological Corporation. It has been designed to measure aptitudes which are of importance in clerical work of all kinds. It is divided into three subunits: clerical, numerical and verbal. Each subunit may be used singly or in combination to appraise the suitability of a client for a given job or to locate areas in which the trainee needs further improvement.

The Kuder Preference Record is published by the Science Research Associates. It is an exploratory device to locate various occupational interests that a client may have. The Kuder measures ten broad areas: outdoor, mechanical, computational, scientific, persuasive, artistic, literary, musical, social service and clerical. From these general areas, the counselor can identify related occupations for the trainee. These employment interests may have been discussed previously or they may have been unrecognized by the client. The results serve therefore as a springboard for further discussions and investigations of the job market. The test has no time limit. Administration and scoring is approximately one and a half hours.

The Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test (BMCT) is published by The Psychological Corporation. It is designed to measure the ability to perceive and understand the relationship of physical forces and mechanical elements in practical situations. Time alloted for the test is thirty minutes, sufficient for most trainees to complete it. The scores may be compared to a set of norms which compare test results of persons currently employed in various mechanical-related employment. It is administered in Spanish as well as in English.

The InterAmerican Series is published by the Guidance Testing Association with the aid of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. It is designed to determine reading and general ability levels of Spanish-speaking people. There are five parts corresponding to five levels of difficulty, from the first grade to the first year in college. The reading consists of three parts: I. Level of Comprehension; II. Comprehension Speed; III. Vocabulary. The General Ability is divided into six parts: I. Sentence Completion; II. Analogies; III. Computation; IV. Work Relationships; V. Classification; VI. Numerical Series. These various sections may be combined to obtain a verbal, non-verbal, and numerical score. The primary use of these tests in O + A is to obtain the client's level of learning, comprehension and ability in his native language. The total test time is four hours.

The Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) is administered during O + A. It is published by McGraw-Hill, Inc. It is designed to measure adult achievements in reading, mathematics and language. The counseling staff utilizes these test results to obtain pre-instructional information on the client's status in the three basic skill areas, to identify areas of weaknesses and to function as a basis for preparing an individualized program adapted to the trainee's

special, individual needs. The entire battery is administered in approximately four hours during at least two sittings.

The instruments alluded to in the foregoing are just one of many mechanisms employed in O + A program to insure that the trainee is given every opportunity to demonstrate aptitudes, attitudes, and preferences. It is essential to comprehend fully that formal instruments are only one of many mechanisms employed to effect an Employability Development Plan. The O + A program is designed so that each device is complementary. Other facets include completion of registration and health forms, an explanation of the center's rules and regulations, a tour of the facility, work samples, job orientation, personal development, occupational assessments, physical examination, and vocational counseling.

The primary purpose of the registration form, questionnaire and health form is to provide information on educational background and employment history as well as to locate possible supportive service needs, physical barriers to employment, and any previous problems with job retention and/or training.

Orientation to the C.E.T.A. program provides the trainee information about the organization, the function of the teams, and available opportunities for occupational training and remedial education. These include Skills Center training, on-the-job training, preparation for the GED, individual referrals, direct job placement, work experience, a combination of skills training and work experience, and further formal education. The paymaster explains payment procedures to the trainees. This is further supported by the Skills Center attendance counselor who explains the necessity for good attendance, punctuality, and rules and regulations governing them.

Work samples are divided into three major areas: manipulative skills, measurement skills, and clerical skills. The samplings explore the trainee's finger and manual dexterity, motor coordination, eye-hand coordination, sense of touch and clerical ability. Scores are determined by the number of errors and time it takes to complete the task. All work samples elicit additional information on the trainee's ability to follow directions, his accuracy, cooperation, work pace, effort, attitude, interests, and social skills. The total time for these instruments varies according to the trainee's abilities.

Occupational assessment consists of supervised participation in on-going occupational skills projects. These assessments cover an orientation to the skills area including employment opportunitites and wage scales, determination of prior knowledge in the area, and actual "hands-on" experience. A post test is administered to evaluate the trainee's retention of the material covered and his learning aptitudes. This experience provides the orientation instructors and counselors with additional information about the trainee's attitudes, aptitudes, interests, m anipulative skills, ability to follow directions and social skills. It is also an opportunity for the trainee to assess his own interest and abilities in these areas. The trainee may participate in a least three "live" occupational assessments.

Job orientation concentrates on basic information necessary for a trainee to enter the work world. These topics have been compiled into an "Employment Information Cycle" which continues throughout skills training. The lectures and discussions are designed to have a cumulative attitudinal affect on the trainee, preparing him for successful employment. The initial steps toward employment are covered during O + A: completion of application forms, employment benefits, entry-level skills, income, responsibilities of employer

and employee. The lectures and group discussions are supplemented by films and audio tapes produced primarily by the Skills Center staff.

Personal development is a component of the job orientation cycle developed by the Skills Center staff. A discussion led by the Center's nurse focuses on the relationship between good health and job retention..Information is provided about various health facilities in the Springfield area.

Each trainee meets individually with a Skills Center counselor on two occasions to discuss vocational goals and objectives, specific barriers to employment, test results, and evaluation of his participation in O + A. Concurrent with these interviews, O + A staff and counselors discuss observations and test results with the appropriate team. The team then evaluates the results with the client and together they formulate an Employability Development Plan.

CONCLUSIONS

Certainly, these concepts of Orientation and Assessment can not be unilaterally separated from one another. There are innumerable instances in which the mechanisms of orientation and assessment are interwoven and interlocked; however, there certainly can be established a specific pattern for each of the two components.

Orientation is primarily involved with four characteristics: the self, the community, C.E.T.A., and employment and training options. The prime objective of orientation is to expose the trainee to these major patterns and to demonstrate how all are interdependent. To effect this process systematically and cogently requires the services of a significant number of C.E.T.A. staff to include: orientation personnel, job orientation specialist, vocational counselor, attendance counselors, supportive services advocates, employment service staff, Skills Center administration, and medical personnel. At some

point during the orientation phase, these C.E.T.A. personnel are scheduled to speak and to discuss their areas of specialization.

Orientation, therefore, is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. to develop client self-awareness
2. to build client's self-confidence
3. to provide the client with information as to the community agencies that can be of assistance
4. to assist in determining supportive services needs
5. to assist the client to comprehend fully the C.E.T.A. program and how it can impact positively his needs
6. to provide initial impetus toward career concepts and career awareness
7. to determine medical and other health needs
8. to provide information as to labor market needs in Hampden County
9. to familiarize the client with a variety of training components and concepts to include: Skills Center training programs, on the job training, direct job placement, work experience, supported work, and individual referrals
10. to initiate meaningful and positive discussion pertinent to obtaining and retaining an employment position
11. to provide information as to wage scales and the significance of fringe benefits in employment
12. to initiate discussion groups pertinent to good attendance and positive attitudes and how they impact job retention and career mobility

The assessment unit is primarily concerned with the trainee's aptitudes and attitudes and how these relate to careers. As enumerated in the orientation section, the two components are interdependent and decisions are realized only after data have been collected from both vehicles. Assessment of one's aptitudes for employment and/or training is achieved through a diverse number of tools. Under no circumstances, can decisions be made based on one or even two evaluative criteria. The Skills Center's assessment components entail the use of the following career-oriented mechanisms:

1. Formal testing to include:

   a. General Aptitude Test Battery
   b. Kuder Preference
   c. Bennett Mechanical
   d. Test of Adult Basic Education
   e. General Clerical Test
   f. Inter-American Series
   g. Lectura

2. Physical examinations and other medical and health collection systems

3. Work sampling to determine:

   a. Motor coordination
   b. Eye-hand coordination
   c. Manipulative skills
   d. Finger dexterity
   e. Clerical skills
   f. Sorting aptitudes

4. "Hands on" occupational skills assessments available to the client:

   a. Machine occupations
   b. Sheet Metal
   c. Office occupations
   d. Electronics
   e. Welding
   f. Graphics
   g. Plant & building maintenance
   h. Major appliance repair
   i. Air-conditioning and refrigeration
   j. Retail occupations
   k. Health occupations
   l. Food Services
   m. Small engine repair
   n. Building trades

*These may vary according to labor market data and project availability.

5. Vocational Counseling to derive:

   a. work history
   b. education
   c. employment objectives
   d. aptitudes and attitudes
   e. interests
   f. potential barriers to participation

Essentially, assessment of one's aptitudes' and attitudes is a very thorough process which entails formal testing, work sampling, health information, "hands on" assessment, and vocational counseling. Again, a significant number of staff are involved in the process. These include: Team counselors, vocational counselors, assessment specialists, occupational instructors, medical team, and testing personnel.

Certainly, the most important individual in the decision-making process is the client. It is he or she who must make the final decision based upon needs, commitments, interest, and willingness to participate.

A final report is developed by orientation and assessment staff and this is disseminated both in writing and verbally to Team personnel on the Monday succeeding the Friday of the client's completion of O + A. This completes the initial formal phase of the client's participation in the C.E.T.A. process.

HAMPDEN DISTRICT REGIONAL SKILLS CENTER
ORIENTATION & ASSESSMENT COMPONENT
SPRINGFIELD & HOLYOKE

March 30, 1976

TIME	MONDAY	TIME	TUESDAY	TIME	WEDNESDAY	TIME	THURSDAY	TIME	FRIDAY
8:30	Welcome and Attendance	8:30-8:45	Group sessions (scheduling activities)	8:30	Physicals and Kuder (As the Kuder is a preference instrument, the trainees will be permitted to stop and report for the physical. They can return and continue the Kuder)	8:30	Occupational Assessment - Machine Operator	8:30	Pay Forms
8:50	Groups (2) Counselors (Introduction to the counseling effort)	8:45	Occupational Assessment - EBA			8:30	General Clerical Achievement Battery (for those interested in clerical occupations)	9:00	TABE (final sub component to be completed)
9:05	Small groups (discuss schedule, tasks, assessments)	8:45-10:30	Work Sampling and Vocational Counseling (for those not involved in an occupational assessment)	8:30-11:30	GATB (H)	8:30-10:30	Work Sampling and Vocational counseling (for those not involved in assessments or in GCAB)	10:00-12:40	Second formal Counseling Sessions (vocational counselors to meet again with trainees)
10:00	Tour of Skills Center facilities	9:00	Occupational Assessment-Clerical (H)	11:00	Attendance Counseling and Payroll Information (Spfld.) (2 groups)				
10:20	Break	10:30	Break			10:30	Break	10:30	Break
10:30	Introduce and complete a number of essential CETA & Skills Center documents	10:45	Occupational Assessment - E.A.R.					10:40-12:40	Health Information (Nursing Staff)
11:45	Locator (formal instrument to determine achievement level for TABE)	10:45-12:40	Work Sampling & Vocational Counseling (for those not involved in an occupational assessment or who have just completed one)	11:30	Attendance counseling and Payroll Information (H)	10:40-12:40	Occupational Assessment - Welding		
						10:10-12:40	Work Sampling and Job Orientation		
12:00	Lunch	12:40	Lunch	12:00	Lunch	12:40	Lunch	12:40	Lunch
12:35 to 3:40	Introduction to assessment instruments and initiate formally GATB & TABE	1:15	Occupational Assessment - EBA (H)	12:35	Bennett Mechanical English, Spanish	1:15	Achievement Levels-Spanish Inter-American Series & Lectura	1:15	World of Work Orientation (Discussion of work ethic and how it will impact the trainee in his quest for career oriented employment)
3:40 to 4:00	Discuss, Review and Preview (Trainees and O + A Staff)	1:15	Occupational Assessments - Clerical & Graphics	1:20	Occupational Assessment - Food Services and Sheet Metal	1:15	Second Section of the GATB & TABE (for those trainees who had been involved in other activities)		
4:00	Dismissal	1:45	Occupational Assessment-P/B Maintenance (Holyoke)		Work Sampling & Counseling (for those who are not involved in an occupational assessment)	1:15-4:00	Job Orientation, Work Sampling, and Vocational Counseling (for those not involved or who have completed GATB, TABE, Lectura)	3:50	Conclusions (O + A Staff)
		1:15	Work Sampling & Counseling (for those not involved in an assessment or who have just completed one)					4:00	Dismissal
		4:00	Dismissal	4:00	Dismissal	4:00	Dismissal		

WORK SAMPLES
in
ORIENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

The primary purpose of the work samples is to explore various abilities and behaviors pertinent to the client's occupational goals. These work tasks test without the requirement of a set of time limits. In this way, the test administrator is able to observe such work habits as the client's ability to follow oral directions and demonstrations, the manner in which he relates to supervisors and co-workers, frustration levels, and the ability to work independently (since every individual demonstrates unique work habits, it is important to administer the samples over and extended time period). As a demonstration follows oral directions, this battery of tests may be administered to non-English speaking clients.

In introducing the work samples, the clients are given a brief explanation of their purpose and the procedure for administering them. Each client is given a time clock card which identifies each sample and indicates where he is to mark the time. A time clock is placed in a convenient location for student's use. The directions for each task are given in a small group, and the client practices on the time card and begins his work. When he has completed a task, he marks the time again. The test administrator corrects the work and records the time, number of errors and behavioral observations on a score sheet. He then begins the explantion of the next work sample.

The battery of tests consists of 16 samples, which fall into five categories: inspection, clerical, sorting, packaging, and motor coordination.

Inspection includes five samples: vials, defective marbles, gaging machine nuts, compass and ruler, and spark plug gapping. This group assesses the individual's ability to distinguish between objects that are identical except for some slight variation. To complete these tasks successfully, the client utilizes speed, a knowledge of measurement, a sense of touch and sight, manipulative skills, and eye-hand coordination.

Sorting involves two work samples: the marble board and the BB board. Speed, color recognition, finger dexterity, accuracy, and an ability to concentrate are essential to complete this group.

Packaging identifies the individual's manual dexterity, ability to repeat a task with accuracy, and a knowledge of measurement skills. This involves one sample, threading washers.

The motor board is the transference of nuts and washers from one side of the board to the other. This requires good motor coordination, speed and a degree of competiveness.

Clerical includes the zip code directory, mail sorting, checking for errors, payroll, telephone book, catalogue checking. These are designed to test minimal skills which are required of an individual entering clerical related employment.

The mean rank for each of the five categories has been compiled from the scores of the training population at the Skills Center. In interpreting these ranks, the client's performance is classified as below average, average and above average. The following table illustrates how these ranks relate to the three categories:

WORK SAMPLES CATEGORY	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
Inspection	1-5	6-7	8-9
Packaging	1-5	6-7	8-9
Sorting	1-4	5-7	8-9
Clerical	1-4	5-7	8-9
Motor Coordination	1-2	3-5	6-9

Due to the constantly changing population at the Skills Center, the interpretation of these ranks also fluctuates. Presently, they are geared to training population interested in the following occupations: machine shop, metal fabrication, electrical appliance repair, air conditioning and refrigeration, electronics bench assembly, food services, and clerical-related employment.

The basic education level for these people is generally between 4th and 13th grade though clients with less than a 4th grade education are administered the work samples.

This battery of tests is administered along with the TABE, GATB, Bennett Mechanical, General Clerical, and Kuder Interest Record in a one week testing program at the Skills Center. Together, they contribute to a general analysis of the client's aptitudes, behaviors and potentials.

ORIENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

EMPLOYMENT ORIENTATION UNIT

The objectives of the job orientation component include encouraging the trainee to analyze realistically his assets and liabilities before seeking employment. The component also presents various employment techniques including how to apply and acquire information about a prospective place of employment through personal contacts, employment offices, newspaper advertisements, civil service, and other related services.

The trainee is also provided with techniques and actual practice in completing application forms, the purpose of such forms, including the use of various symbols or abbreviations, the rationale for asking about one's educational background and employment history, and typical responses expected. The importance of a resume' is also stressed and various formats are made available.

Job orientation also includes discussion of the job interview and how to plan for it. This includes suitable appearance and preparation for questions to be asked during the interview. The need for an honest, positive attitude during the interview is also stressed.

In addition to the methodology for acquiring employment, a significant period of time is utilized to direct and initiate discussion pertinent to employment attitudes. Topics for discussion include: the work ethic, remuneration and satisfaction, attendance, career mobility, and human relations both with supervisors and peers.

For those who enter Skills Center training subsequent to Orientation and Assessment, a complete employment orientation program is available on a continuing basis.

ORIENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

"HANDS ON" OCCUPATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

During each individual "hands on" job assessment, the occupational instructor evaluates the trainee's aptitudes and attitudes for success in each specific occupational area. This is accomplished through actual "hands on" participation in a simplified job-related activity and through a series of pre and post testing. The instructor assesses the trainee's comprehension and retention of verbal, written, and graphic instructions, the ability to handle tools and machinery, and the ability to perform job-related subject matter. Major emphasis is placed on the trainee's demonstrated behaviors, interests and approach to a potentially new learning situation.

The occupational assessments are utilized along with other evaluative instruments to help determine the trainee's suitability for an occupational training program and ultimately employment opportunity with in the occupational cluster. This is only one of many forms of assessments set in motion during the O + A component; however, it is one that enables the trainee to participate actively throughout the process.

ORIENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE UNIT

INTRODUCTION

The health segment is of significant importance to the overall Orientation and Assessment Component. During the time provided for this endeavor, the Skills Center nurse discusses with the clients a number of essential health care issues that are germane to skills training, employment opportunities, and personal health and hygiene.

The setting provided for this exchange of valuable information is the morning of the client's final day in Orientation and Assessment. At this time, the clients have developed some very positive inter personal relationships and have developed a rapport with the orientation and assessment staff and a sound comprehension of the objectives of the program. It is essential that the foregoing have been realized so that the nurse can discuss with the clients very candidly the importance of positive health habits and health attitudes. A number of topics are broached during the time frame. Among them are: personal hygiene, communicable diseases, dental care, good nutrition and proper diet, personal appearance, and first aid and safety procedures. An integral part of the session is the emphasis on job placement and retention and how good health habits and health attitudes can contribute to a successful career in the world of work.

The nurse also provides information as to the location and objectives of various local health care facilities. There is ample opportunity during this period for exchange between members of the group and with the instructors and other orientation and assessment personnel.

ORIENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION UNIT

The physical exam is a valuable segment of the client's orientation and assessment program. The major priorities in administering the physical are to detect any health problems that may be present, referral to specific health agencies if required, determination of the client's immediate capability to accept training and employment. The doctor, together with the other members of the medical team, prepares a report for distribution to the Skills Center vocational counselors, the Team personnel, and the client. Should the report deem the necessity for medical treatment the Team staff have available the necessary resources to initiate such procedures. The primary objectives of the physical are to give the trainee an awareness of his/her physical status and to determine physical ability to accept C.E.T.A. programs. It must be emphasized that the client who has a physical problem that presents a barrier to immediate program implementation will have access to re-enrollment at a later date.

The examination includes blood tests, urinalysis and a physical examination. The urine is examined for specific gravity, albumin, sugar content, red and white blood cells, and bacteria. The blood profile includes complete blood count, wasserman test, blood sugar, hepatitis exam, and electrolite balance. The physical examination includes blood pressure, eye tests, height, weight, hearing, and a complete physical examination given by a physician.

ORIENTATION & ASSESSMENT

VOCATIONAL COUNSELING

I. Group Meeting - Introduction

In the setting of a general introduction the vocational counselor introduces the clients to the overall purpose of the Orientation and Assessment component. The counselor describes the Orientation and Assessment experience as a unique and valuable opportunity for the clients to assess their capabilities and to explore their occupational interests. Various options to the training available at the Skills Center such as OJT and individual referrals are briefly presented.

II. Individual Counseling Session

The vocational counselor meets individually on at least two occasions with the client. In the initial interview vocational goals and objectives are explored, biographical data and work history are discussed, and prior interagency contacts are determined. The counselor and client discuss the specific barriers to training and/or employment which may exist and plans for their remediation are pursued. In subsequent interviews results obtained from the various evaluative instruments such as tests, work samples, and job assessments are interpreted for the client and the various resulting options are discussed.

III. EDP Meetings and Follow-up

After the client has completed the Orientation and Assessment component, the vocational counselor meets with the client's team representative to discuss the client's overall performance and vocational aspirations. A written report containing recommendations is also presented. This report represents a summary and interpretation of the general O&A data, various evaluative instruments, the client's work history and education, and the interview and counseling process.

The vocational counselor maintains ongoing contact with those clients who have

been recommended for alternate programs such as supported work, work experience, and extensive vocational counseling with an ultimate goal of entry into Skills Center training.